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## FLU VACCINE NOW AVAILABLE AT DOH-BAY

*Everyone is encouraged to get their flu vaccination as soon as possible*



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**Panama City, Fla. -** The Florida Department of Health in Bay County (DOH-Bay) is urging residents to contact their healthcare provider or pharmacy to get vaccinated against the flu as soon as possible. Once vaccinated, it takes about two weeks to offer protection. DOH-Bay now also has vaccines for children, adults, and seniors available.

“As we enter cold and flu season, the same mitigation strategies we have implemented to fight COVID-19 will also be effective against the common cold and flu.” said Sandon S. Speedling, MHS, CPM, CPH, Administrator and Health Officer for the Florida Department of Health in Bay County. “Last year’s flu shot will not protect you this year. Everyone who is able to get a flu shot should get a vaccination annually to protect themselves and those around them.”

DOH-Bay is now offering flu vaccines for children ages 6 months to 18 years of age at no charge through the Vaccines for Children program. DOH-Bay also offers adult flu vaccines for \$36.88 and high-dose flu vaccine for \$74.25. Vaccines are available by appointment only. Call (850) 872-4455 and follow the prompts for an appointment. If your organization is interested in on-site flu vaccinations, please contact Christine Bartels at [Christine.Bartels@FLHealth.gov](mailto:Christine.Bartels@FLHealth.gov) or call (850) 252-9550.

Getting the flu shot each year is important but reducing illness and hospitalization from flu is even more critical this year to protect frontline health care workers and hospital systems who will continue to care for people with COVID-19 and other illnesses. Also, having the flu and COVID-19 at the same time could lead to a negative outcome.

The flu and COVID-19 are respiratory illnesses, the way to help prevent these two viruses from circulating at the same time is to get your flu vaccine now. COVID-19 and flu vaccinations can be safely administered at the same time.

Additionally, there will be less spread of the flu and COVID-19 if everyone continues to:

- Stay home if you're sick
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly

The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone six months and older, including pregnant women. It can take up to two weeks after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu. Getting vaccinated if you are healthy helps to protect our most vulnerable populations. People at higher risk for flu-related complications include children less than 5, adults over the age of 65,

people with compromised immune systems, pregnant women and people who have existing medical conditions, such as asthma and obesity.

To learn more about the flu, visit the following:

- General flu information- [cdc.gov/flu](https://www.cdc.gov/flu).
- People at high risk for complications- [cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm).
- Flu vaccine safety- [cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/vaccinesafety.htm).
- VaccineFinder.org- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/index.html>.

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